(c) and (d) As reported by the States, the main causes for committing suicide by farmers are crop failure, indebtedness due to loans taken at high rate of interest,, drought, social and economic insecurity, incurable ailments, addiction to alcohol and family disputes.

Development of transgenic varieties by ICAR

*76. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that transgenic varieties of twelve varieties of fruits, vegetables and grains will soon be developed in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government have studied the impact of transgenic crops on the environment, bio-technology and health of the consumers before giving consent for their development; and

(c) the details of precautions taken before they are developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) scientists?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has contemplated development of transgenics in rice, sorghum, maize, chickpea, pigeonpea, soybean, cotton, Indian mustard, banana, papaya, tomato, brinjal, potato and cassava through its institutes and also through a network project.

(b) Biosafety aspects of transgenics are studied before commercial release by the nodal department viz. Department of Bio-technology (DBT).

(c) Precautions are invariably taken before development of transgenic crops with regard to selection of targeted trait, appropriate genetic background, genes and technology, confinement of research material, and testing. For comprehensive testing for environment and biosafety, all transgenic crops/ varieties are provided to the DBT by the ICAR before their commercial release by Ministry of Environment & Forests as per EPA, 1986 regulations and guidelines.

Sickel-Cell Disease

*77. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sickle-cell disease is most prevalent